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**St. Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe. Jacqueline Jenkins , Katherine J. Lewis
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useful name index, which allows some subject searching. In all, Ikas is careful and productive, only sometimes repetitive, convincing in most of his speculations.

It remains the case, however, that this is an odd collection, really the conclusion of a nineteenth-century publishing project on Martin, his text, immediate continuators, and now his continuators' English continuators. The historiographical quality of the texts, their novel information, insight, or literary qualities, declines with each stage. The art of the continuator was attenuating in this period, evidently so in these texts. This is usefully demonstrated here but hardly dispels doubt over the utility of the texts themselves. While we learn much about the ways of the continuators, this is not set in a theoretical framework, and several important scholars of medieval historiography are omitted from the bibliography, the effect being a loss of relevance.

Whereas nineteenth-century commentators thought Martin less important than his continuators, Ikas argues here that they had little enough influence. The reader can agree with his modest recommendation. Perhaps faced with so carefully edited a collection, well presented in all respects, it is best to be thankful for the further exhibition of later medieval English historiography's vitality and depth, and especially for the readers as much as the writers that made it so. These texts are witness to the overflowing interest in the historical. Indeed, Ikas suggests that part of the function of these minor works was pedagogical, that they were good for teaching and memorizing (p. 76). Certain stories, then as now, appealed and wanted retelling: how large Boniface VIII looms here, including the dramatic encounter with the French king's ministers; almost all of the texts also mention the first jubilee indulgence. In other words, the volume provides in its thirteen texts windows onto the fourteenth century, through English churchmen of no great repute, somewhat common men, sketching the papacy and empire in crisis.

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JACQUELINE JENKINS and KATHERINE J. LEWIS, eds., *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe*. (Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts, 8.) Turnhout: Brepols, 2003. Pp. xiv, 257; black-and-white figures and tables. €67.50.

Virgin martyrs were among the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. Yet until recently they did not attract much interest from medievalists. Fortunately, in the past few years, thanks to the work of scholars like Karen Winstead, Sarah Salih, and Kathleen Coyne Kelly, the study of virgin martyrs has developed into a full-fledged subdiscipline in hagiographical scholarship: virginity studies.

This volume is an exponent both of the new interest in virgin martyrs and of the latest developments in medieval gender studies. It focuses on Katherine of Alexandria, who was probably the most popular female saint after the Virgin Mary. Although research on virgin martyrs has been relatively scarce, Katherine has been studied ever since the rise of women's studies. A female saint who, according to her legend, vanquished fifty wise men in a debate was sure to be irresistible to feminist scholarship. From the perspective of gender, her life contains other interesting features as well. For instance, contrary to other virgin martyrs, she was not perceived as an object of sexual desire by her persecutors. This raises the question of what her gender actually was: was she perceived as a symbolic male rather than as a female?

The present collection of studies aims at explaining why Katherine exerted such an appeal on medieval believers. It is an important contribution to Katherine studies, which until now have focused mainly on the appeal that the saint exerted on a limited group of adherents: religious women in England. Her attraction to other target groups, in England and in other regions in western Europe, remained in the dark. This book attempts to make a start in correcting this situation. Furthermore, in focusing on the symbolic value of Kath-

erine for both female and male adherents, it follows the development toward “real” gender studies, which are supposed to discuss all genders.

The volume contains a most useful introduction on the career of Katherine in the West, followed by ten case studies. The editors give an overview of the development of her cult from the ninth century, of its definitive takeoff in the age of the crusades, and of the texts and images concerning her. They point out that it is by no means simple to determine why she out of others rose to such heights. For instance, it is obvious that Katherine’s capacities as a worker of miracles were a major reason for the attraction that she exerted on believers. However, as the editors point out, was she beloved because of the miracles, or were miracles ascribed to her because of her popularity? A similar question applies to her *vita*, which put her apart from other virgin martyrs in several respects. I have mentioned the debate with the philosophers and the trouble about her gender. Fascinating as those matters may be, Katharine’s major claim to a special position among virgin martyrs is her mystical marriage to Jesus Christ. This tale was added to her legend only from the mid-thirteenth century. Again the question is warranted whether the hagiographers ascribed this mark of honor to her because she had a special position already or whether the idea that she was special grew out of such stories.

The case studies are somewhat different in scope, depending on the aim of the authors, the availability or lack of sources, or the state of research concerning their particular subject. Some discuss the rise of Katherine in a certain region. The authors of such articles use a variety of sources: apart from the *vita*, images, the evidence of name giving, and such. Other authors chose to write a detailed analysis of the appeal of Katherine to specific target groups, often basing themselves on a limited number of sources created for that group.

Christine Walsh details the rise of the cult of Katherine from the advent of some relics at Sainte-Trinité-du-Mont in Rouen in the mid-eleventh century, well before the First Crusade. When the Normans conquered England, they took devotion to Katherine across the Channel. Katherine Lewis describes the pilgrimage and cult of Katherine in late-medieval England. For those who could not afford the journey to Mount Sinai, substitute sites were created, an early analogy to the nineteenth-century grottoes of Lourdes. Jane Cartwright gives an inventory of the image and popularity of Katherine in Wales, using both the Middle Welsh *vita* and the evidence of names and images. Tracey Sands maps the career of Katherine among the Swedish aristocracy. She inventories the incidence of Katherine as a name giver and of her appearances on the seals of several noblewomen. A member of a royal family herself, Katherine was sure to appeal to aristocrats. The next article, by Anke Bernau, focuses on Katherine’s rising popularity in the later Middle Ages. Bernau links the way in which Katherine’s body is described to Scholastic practice and to the contemporary perception of the threat to Western society by outsiders such as Muslims. The articles of Emily Francomano and Jacqueline Jenkins discuss lives of Katherine written for laywomen in Spain and England respectively. These articles give a good opportunity for comparative study of Katherine’s appeal to this group. Karen Winstead considers the symbolic value of images of Katherine, particularly the ones in which she is portrayed with masculine hairstyles. Convincingly, Winstead argues that the saint’s hairstyle had different meanings for different spectators. Sherry Reames discusses the attraction of Katherine to the clergy in England, especially in the context of rising criticism of various aspects of the cult of the saints. The final article, by Alison Frazier, describes the fate of Katherine’s legend at the hands of the Renaissance hagiographer Antonio degli Agli, who, like the Bollandists, attempted to give an account of her life that could withstand historical criticism.

I like this book very much. It makes crystal clear how much research on virgin martyrs has to offer. What I like most is the way in which the authors show how fluid the image of the martyr could be, how she could appeal to widely divergent groups. Thus they show

how dangerous it is to think in ironclad categories. Furthermore, I like the way in which the authors look critically at earlier research on virgin martyrs and gender in the Middle Ages. In fact, I am looking forward to research that would also take into account important regions like France, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Low Countries, missing from the present volume. It is regrettable that the present book contains far too few pictures. This is odd in view of the fact that there is so much discussion of images of the saint. Moreover, some articles seem to be the fruit of research that has barely started. Yet the present book is an important contribution to both hagiographical and gender scholarship.

MATHILDE VAN DIJK, University of Groningen

RUTH MAZO KARRAS, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe*. (The Middle Ages Series.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. Pp. vii, 246. \$45 (cloth); \$17.50 (paper).

The relatively brief history of gender as both a subject and a technique of analysis in medieval studies has seen an astonishingly rapid trajectory of growth and maturation—from radical cutting edge to indispensable mainstream in not much more than two decades. An outgrowth of women's history (academe's registration of the women's movement of the 1970s), gender proved a much finer tool for separating the layers of social constraint and culturally constructed meaning from biologically female historical bodies, and the gender in question for scholarship was, for a very long time, uncritically and unquestionably feminine. Since the derogatory array of qualities ascribed to the female character or "nature" and passed down with great consistency from early pagan antiquity into the Christian Roman world and then into post-Roman Europe had the net effect of justifying male privilege in every arena of life, gender at first seemed like something invented by men and inflicted on women—nothing that men would share in or dispute among themselves. In medieval studies, the fact that men and women lived out their lives in societies whose authoritative framing structures were patriarchal seemed to say enough about men and their (self-evident) masculinity—a sexual ideology of posturing dominance. But gender-focused study addressed to women was, if anything, too successful for such reductive assumptions, and it so thickened and deepened our appreciation of women's lives and identities that the simplified "dominant patriarchal male" came to seem a cartoonishly inadequate "other" for the world in which complex medieval women lived. Ruth Mazo Karras's work on prostitution, social standards, and didactic morality contributed substantially to preparing the way for a more intense scrutiny of the conditions males had to meet for "being a man" in the social world.

Men, it turned out, had gender, too, and had nearly as difficult a time dealing with it. The idea that the gender of male persons, the qualities and standards for "masculinity," was susceptible to class variation, social pressure, and individual slippage thus arrived rather late on the scene but with the enormous benefit of the theoretical advances in female-focused gender studies, and the early 1990s saw the takeoff point for what rapidly became an academic growth industry of considerable fertility and sophistication. The marker of scholarship in this subtler mode is the use of the plural form, "masculinities," to indicate that even in patriarchal societies, there was no one single way to be an adequate man or, more to the point, there were many impediments in the way of males' attaining enough of the elusive and valued "masculinity" and far too many ways to lose it. Karras begins her examination of male social roles of knighthood, academic life, and urban craftsmen stressing variation and class-related social pressures: "not all men were in the same position in terms of their power and influence, or in terms of the way society viewed them as gendered beings. . . . Different walks of life created different sets of expectations for men, and indi-